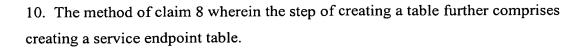
## Claims

1. A method of establishing a path for data transmissions in a system having a plurality of possible paths comprising:

establishing internal connection paths through the system based upon a configuration policy.

- 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration policy comprises a configuration policy file stored within the system.
- 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the configuration policy file is stored within a configuration database within the system.
- 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the configuration policy may be dynamically changed within the system while the system continues to operate.
- 5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  changing established internal connection paths through the system based
  upon a configuration policy and changing resource needs.
- 6. A method of establishing a path for data transmissions in a system having a plurality of possible paths through a cross-connection card comprising creating a configuration database; and establishing internal connection paths through the card based upon a configuration policy and the configuration database.
- 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises applying a configuration policy based on available system resources and needs at a given time.
- 8. The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises creating a table in the configuration database to provide connection information to the system.
- 9. The method of claim 8 wherein the step of creating a table further comprises creating a path table.



11. The method of claim 8 wherein the method further comprises establishing a partial record in a path table and a service point table when a user connects to a particular port on a universal port card in the system.

- 12. The method of claim 11 wherein the method further comprises transmitting data from partial records to a policy provisioning manager.
- 13. The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises implementing a connection policy based on a comparison of at least one new path characteristic with available resources on a forwarding card.
- 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the comparison step further comprises comparing a desired number of time slots with available forwarding card resources.
- 15. The method of claim 13 wherein the comparison step further comprises comparing a desired number of virtual circuits with available forwarding card resources.
- 16. The method of claim 6 wherein the method further comprises storing configuration table settings in persistent storage to ensure that the configuration settings are maintained in the event of a system shut down.

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